



The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Wasatch Audubon Society
Volume 45, Number 1 ~ January / February 2026

President's Corner

by Jen Hitt

Happy New Year from Wasatch Audubon! As I write this in mid-December, we are in the midst of the five Christmas Bird Counts our chapter sponsors. It will be interesting to see what sightings the record-breaking warm temperatures will bring. I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to join us for one or more of these counts. By volunteering your time, you have contributed to the country's longest running citizen science bird project; data from which are used in academic journals, government reports, and by [National Audubon](#) to compile population trend reports. You can view data from past Christmas Bird Counts [here](#).

We have another great citizen science opportunity coming up. The annual Great Backyard bird count, organized by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon, and Birds Canada will be held this year from February 13-16. Participants from all over the world join this survey. We encourage you to join, too; it can take as little as 15 minutes. Learn more about the Great Backyard Bird Count [here](#).

We held elections at our December meeting. Dallin Henderson will serve as vice-President in 2026. Sharen Perry will continue as secretary. Jay Stretch serve as treasurer. George Muller, Lynn Carroll, and Ruth Carmona-Murray will serve another term on the Board of Directors. Thank you to everyone who has been willing to fill these roles. We really appreciate you!

We will continue our weekly bird walks and monthly field trips in 2026. See the events section of this newsletter for dates, times and locations. Birders of all abilities are encouraged to join us.

If you are looking for an opportunity to be more involved in Wasatch Audubon, we are still looking for a new program director. The program director is responsible for scheduling speakers for our membership meetings every other month. If you are interested in this position, please contact jenhitt@hotmail.com. Alternatively, if you have suggestions for speakers for an upcoming meeting, please let me know.

I think 2026 is going to be a great year for Wasatch Audubon, and I hope to spend time birding with you this year.

Jen Hitt, President



Aspen Ames looks for waterfowl during our Bear River Christmas Bird count. Photo: Jen Hitt

Wasatch Audubon Society

Officers

President	Jen Hitt	801-540-5091
Vice President	Dallin Henderson	801-309-7285
Secretary	Sharen Perry	801-392-9554
Treasurer	Jay Stretch	801-721-9432
Past President	John Bellmon	801-814-7544

Board

2026/2027	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
2026/2027	George Muller	801-745-4035
2026/2027	Ruth Carmona-Murray	703-258-2652
2025/2026	Abigail Johnson	
2025/2026	Leah Johnson	
2025/2026	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
2025/2026	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633

Committee Chairpersons

Conservation	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Conservation	John Bellmon	801-444-3704
Education	Dennis Collins	801-393-1115
Feeder Projects	Laura Johnston	801-458-9558
Field Trips	Dan Johnston	801-645-8633
Bird Walks	Ben Johnson	801-231-7008
Membership	Lynn Carroll	801-392-8216
Programs		
Historian	Ruth Davis	801-309-0425
Publicity	Arnold Smith	801-829-3383
Hospitality		
Newsletter	Steve Aird	steven.d.aird@gmail.com

About Us

The Wasatch Audubon Society is an association of people who share an interest in birds, all natural things, and Utah's varied habitats. Our goals include: educating ourselves and others about wildlife and the natural environment; enjoying the outdoors in fellowship with others who share similar values, fostering an appreciation of wildlife and understanding of ecological principles, promoting opportunities for the public to see and appreciate birds and bird habitats, and influencing public policy toward a conservation ethic. You might also want to visit our website at:

<http://www.wasatchaudubon.org>

Conservation Corner

How Will the Utah Legislature Treat the Great Salt Lake This Year?

by Lynn Carroll

Great Salt Lake (GSL) approached a record-low level again in 2025, and our late start to winter doesn't bode well for 2026. However, there were some good developments recently. First, an every-decade update of Utah's State Wildlife Action Plan (UWAP) was finalized last October. "Among the wide-ranging updates," says Audubon on the website, is "a growing attention to saline lakes and the species that depend on them." New on the 2025 UWAP's list of "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" are species dependent on GSL, including the American Avocet, Wilson's Phalarope, and brine fly! Putting them on the list means that the Lake and surrounding wetlands should be protected.

Next, the Governor, other officials, business executives, and philanthropic and conservation organizations formulated and signed the Great Salt Lake 2034 Charter. It's a "pledge to restore and protect the lake for generations to come. The charter sets 2034, the year Utah will again host the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, as the target for reaching healthier lake levels," according to Gov. Cox's press release.

Finally, we heard last month that the new owner of the Huntsville Abbey Farm agreed to a plan to lease 635 acre-feet of water through the GSL Watershed Enhancement Trust annually for the Lake (if approved). He'll switch less productive fields to dry farming techniques to free up the water. This can serve as a model for other farms.

The 2026 45-day General Session of the Utah legislature will start on January 20 and will end on March 6. Will they encourage conservation and provide more funds to achieve these plans? Or will they do more harm than good? I

I fear that they may advance plans to dam the Bear River, depriving GSL of some of its most important input. They may slight the Lake in favor of economic development, then sacrifice the North Arm to save the ecosystem in the south. That would put us at risk of dust storms from that part of the lake, not to mention eliminating any chance of pelican breeding on Gunnison Island.

Dan Strauch, who serves as the Policy Advocate for the Utah Audubon Council (WAS is a member), has been monitoring committee meetings that took place over the summer and fall. He'll be hard at work for those seven weeks, speaking for wildlife and GSL. He'll provide weekly updates, which I will email to WAS members and friends. I hope you will pay attention and respond to calls for action.

However, if you have no interest in those updates about the legislature, I can stop sending them without taking you off the mailing list for other topics. Put "No Political" in the subject line of an email to bradlynn@comcast.net

February Meeting

Our February meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 17 at 7:00 pm. Wasatch Audubon President Jen Hitt will be presenting on eBird. She'll provide a brief tutorial and share information about how to use eBird to enhance your birding. Join us in person at the Ogden Nature Center located at 966 W 12th Street in Ogden or attend virtually via Zoom.

November Field Trip Report

by Jen Hitt

Six birders joined us for our November field trip to Antelope Island. When we started out, fog was completely blanketing the causeway, hiding any waterfowl that may have been there. As the morning progressed, the fog melted away and it turned into a beautiful day.

At Lady Finger point, we saw a sagebrush sparrow and a rock wren. Other notable birds we saw on the island were loggerhead shrikes, burrowing owls, and a great horned owl.



Loggerhead Shrike at Antelope Island, November, 2025.
Photo: Jen Hitt



Harris's Sparrow seen at East Canyon State park during our Morgan Christmas bird count. Photo: Jen Hitt

January and February Bird Walks

January 7 - GSL Nature Center:

8:00 AM Meet at at Dylan's in Kaysville, 185 N. Main St., Kaysville

9:00 AM Meet in the parking lot. [1157 S. Waterfowl Way \(1100 W Glovers Lane\) Farmington](#). **R U L B**

January 14 - Woodland Park, Farmington:

8:00 AM Meet at Dylan's in Kaysville, 185 N. Main St., Kaysville

9:00 AM [300 South 200 East in Farmington](#) **R P/ U L B**

January 21 - Bountiful Pond:

8:00 AM Meet at Ramblin Roads, 544 W. 400 N., Bountiful

9:00 AM [Take the 500 South exit off Legacy Highway, turn west; then follow the frontage road around and back to the north. Meet in the parking lot.](#) **R P/U L B**

January 28 - Willard Bay: (this is a fee area)

8:00 AM Meet at Ramblin Roads 1720 W 12th S Ogden

9:15 AM [Meet at Flying J Parking Lot](#) in Willard, and travel to Willard Bay from there. **R P/U L B**

February 4 - Mueller Park:

8:00 AM Breakfast at Ramblin Roads, 544 W. 400 N., Bountiful

9:00 AM [Meet at the Gates to Mueller Park](#), taking Mueller Park Rd east until you reach parking area or park on the street if parking lot full. Bring your boots! Uphill walk, possible high snow levels **U**

February 11 - Riverdale Trail- South:

8:00 AM Meet at Moore's Family Restaurant 3558 Wall Ave Ogden

9:00 AM Meet at the trailhead off Riverdale Road at [700 W. 4800 Weber River Dr, Riverdale, UT 84405](#) **R, P, L**

February 18 - Powder Mountain Feeders and Surrounding Area:

8:00 AM Meet at Dylan's in Ogden, 981 12th St., Ogden

9:30 AM [Meet at Powder Mountain to view feeders and surrounding area](#)

February 25 - Buffalo Ranches Pond:

8:00 AM Meet at Dylan's in Kaysville

9:00 AM [Meet at large white \(ball\) radar station by the GSL Nature Center](#), walking to the Ranches ponds from there (over 3 miles round trip)

March 4 - Antelope Island Causeway (this is a fee area):

8:00 AM Breakfast at Warren's Drive In, 1778 S. 1000 W., Syracuse

9:00 AM [Meet at the parking lot at the toll booth](#) **R, L**

Accessibility Codes for walks and trips

R - Restrooms available

P - Paved trail **U** - Unpaved trail

P/U - Combination

L - Level trail **M** - Moderately level trail

B - benches available

Upcoming Field Trips

January 24 – Box Elder County

8:00 a.m. Meet in Denny's parking lot on 21st St. off I-15 at 8:00am. We will explore Promontory Point, Howell Valley, etc. Target birds are Gray Partridge, Snow Bunting, Rough-legged Hawk. This is an all-day trip so bring water and lunch. Trip leader – Dan Johnston. Viewing mostly from cars, can stop for restroom breaks.

February 21 - Annual Morgan County Bald Eagle Trip

8:30 a.m. Meet at DWR office (515 E 5300 S in South Ogden). We will caravan from there. Target birds are Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Wild Turkey, American Dipper and Rough legged Hawk. This is an all-day trip so bring water and lunch. Trip leader – John Bellmon. Viewing mostly from cars, can stop for restroom breaks.

New and Renewed Members

Welcome to our new members, and to those who have re-joined after an extended absence! We look forward to seeing you at a meeting or on a birding trip.

Gentry Abbott	Daniel Evans
Sean Adams	Sherry Evans
Sophia Adams	Kit Farkas
Carson Ames	Alina Finkelstein
Laurel Asplund	Summer Fredrickson
Zach B.	Stephanie Gardner
Megan Bartley	Wyn Gardner
Bess Bauer	Shallyse Gastelum
Emma Bell	Mallory Geniusz
John Bergstresser	David Goar
Kaijah Bey	Amelia Gorton
David Black	Kayla Grace
Emma Blanch	Wendy Graham
Susan Blenner	Colin Grey
Adam Blundell	Lori Grimes
Brandi Bosworth	Brenda Haidenthaller
Fanny Boyd	Amanda Hartley
Sarena Boyd	Madison Hartmann
Michelle Braeden	Tod Hawkes
Ireland Brennan	Morey Haymond
Patience Brown	Jillian Heiner
Sean Brown	James Hill
Krista Buda	Boone Hogg
Christopher Buss	Josh Hoggan
Kamryn Butler	Nathan Hooven
Juniper Carbine	Jaxson Horne
Kelly Carrigan	Kyle Joynt
Jared Chandler	Debra M Juarez
Brian Clarke	Jaden Kay
Kari Cook	Ethan Kearns
Andrea Coones	Joe Kelsch
Quinn Cooper	Jackie Kent
Daniel Cortez	Bailey Kirshner
Thomas Daniel's	Ayden Krstich
Rylee Davis	David Laufer
Jude Dougall	Teonte Lenard
Rashea Drake	Malia Long
Braden Droedmiller	Devin Lujan
Kelian Eberly	Emma Lundgren
Andrew Eehart	Camellia Maki
Zel Ellis	Parker Marriott
Hailey Embley	Jordan Martell
DeAnne Eppich	Morgan Martinez
Mackenzie Ertmann	Elyssa Mayo

Melissa Megahed
Mitch Mickinley
Jane Miller
Leonard Miller
Tyler Mimnaugh
Jefferson Moyano
Kodi Nelson
Mary Nemetz
Blaze Olds
Eric Olsen
Macenzie Owen
Matt Owen
Morgan Parry
Lauren Pejza
Ryan Redfoot
Alex Richter
Christina K Riehemann
Jazzy Rodriguez
Legendary Roofing
V. Rubie

Brooke Russell
Gessie Schechinger
Marylou Schlieder
Andrew Shepherd
Natalie Skowbo
Samantha Smith
Rylee Sorensen
Blake Southworth
Aracely Stephens
Dani Stonehocker
Marsi Suaste
Trevor Urban
Zayna V
Cece Van
Heather Wadley
Julie Wetzel
Lauryn Whipple
Wendy Wilson
Beth Young
Kylee Young

Membership in the Wasatch Audubon Society

by Lynn Carroll

You gave a generous donation to Audubon and you live within this chapter's zip-code area (Box Elder, Weber, Morgan and northern Davis counties). Therefore, you are a member of Wasatch Audubon Society (WAS), although you may not have realized it. Our membership has been growing fast, thanks to increased recruiting by National Audubon. We used to mail out hand-addressed welcome letters, but can't now. National recently changed how they share membership information with chapters, and I (as WAS Membership Chair) am getting email addresses for the majority of members. I hope to get them all added to my email program (MailChimp) soon. If you don't receive email from Wasatch Audubon by mid-January you can contact me at bradlynnc@comcast.net to start getting notifications about changes of plans, action alerts, new events, and reminders. Good birding!

Dark Sky Monitoring Progress

Weber County and Ogden Valley have completed the fall monitoring event. The clear night didn't come as planned in November, but finally December 11 provided us with a sky clear enough to proceed with monitoring. Twenty-five volunteers monitored a total of 9 locations in Weber Valley and in the Ogden area. I will have some metrics to report for the next Chickadee edition. It will be interesting to see the relative darkness of different locations, but the data will be more meaningful as we continue collecting seasonally. To this end, WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS! If you are interested in spending minimal time on an excellent project, contact Laura Johnston at laurajohns0150@gmail.com.



Aaron Smith found this red-breasted sapsucker at our Morgan Christmas Bird Count. Photo: Weston Smith

Audubon Membership Application

Membership in Audubon automatically enrolls you as a member of Wasatch Audubon. When you join, you will receive four issues of Audubon magazine each year. Six issues of our chapter newsletter, *The Mountain Chickadee*, are on our website. To join as a new member with an introductory fee of \$20, please go to the following website:

[Audubon Membership](#)

Owl Pellets



Thanks to all who collected owl pellets for me during the last school year. I was able to present my owl program in third, fourth, and fifth grade classes in three school districts.

I never have enough owl pellets, so please keep them coming. The larger barn and great horned owl pellets are best. If you know of a good location to collect them, please give me a call.

Thanks again, and happy birding!

Dennis Collins (801) 393-1115